

Sub Base is Critical to the Region

The Department of Defense's Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) commission will recommend closing up to 100 U.S. military installations worldwide starting in 2006. The BRAC commission will assemble in March 2005 and deliver its recommendations to President George W. Bush in September.

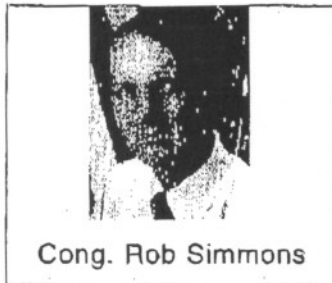
Our concern in eastern Connecticut is to make sure that the Naval Submarine Base New London, in Groton, is not among the facilities targeted for closure. As a member of the House Armed Services Committee I am working aggressively to preserve the Sub Base. I have already spoken to many high-ranking defense officials, including Secretary of the Navy Gordon England, regarding this matter.

Last year we revived the Sub Base Realignment Coalition, headed by John Markowicz, of the South Eastern Connecticut Enterprise Region and Mick O'Beirne, of Groton. This distinguished and practiced group is dedicated to preserving the Sub Base. They have done it before. Comprised of local officials, business leaders and private citizens we are engaged in a team effort. In addition, I am working to have a southeastern Connecticut representative assigned to the BRAC commission.

State lawmakers are an integral part of this undertaking. Working in a bipartisan manner, eastern Connecticut legislators have asked the governor's budget office to allocate revenue to be used to hire a consultant to help prepare our case.

This same level of bipartisan support is found in Washington where I am working with Senators Christopher Dodd and Joseph Lieberman to ensure the Sub Base remains open.

We have a strong case to make. Extraordinary synergy exists in the region. The interaction between the sci-



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entists at the Naval Undersea Warfare Center at Newport, the engineers, designers and technicians at Electric Boat and the commanders and sailors at the Navy Sub Base, makes for a superior defense product. In southeastern Connecticut we provide the heart and soul of submarine technology development and construction as well as operations and maintenance. This synergy adds military value. It's unique to us. It's innovative. It's complex. If we don't tell this story, no one will.

Moving infrastructure and support services for a fleet of submarines to another facility would be costly and time consuming and, since the Navy is the only service to operate submarines, combining it with an already existing base from another branch of the service would be impractical, if it were possible at all. This doesn't make sense for the nation.

It doesn't make sense for us either. The economic impact of the Sub Base is

undeniable. The South Eastern Connecticut Enterprise Region released a report in November 2003 that examined the economic significance of the base. There are more than 7,400 military personnel stationed at the base and another 1,500 civilians are employed there. The payroll for both civilian and military personnel totals more than \$332 million.

In 2001, the region received more than \$2 billion in defense contracts. Electric Boat, the Sub Base and the U.S. Coast Guard Academy are among our region's major employers with more than 20,000 peo-

ple working at those facilities. These hard-working men and women need their jobs to support their families, pay their mortgages and to prepare for their future. The local businesses they patronize also depend upon this economic relationship.

The economic impact of EB and the base send financial ripples throughout our region. Electric Boat alone purchases about \$105 million in goods and services annually from other regional businesses. If those facilities are closed the ripple will disappear and tens of thousands of people would suffer as a result.

In these times, when belts are being tightened and valuable resources must be saved, it is understandable that the federal government would look at military facilities and see where we could be more fiscally responsible. Wasting resources is never a good policy.

However, the evidence shows that the resources spent at the submarine base

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are well placed. In fact, they are leveraged by business and research assets in the region. They are cornerstones of our national security and our region's economic energy.

Recent events indicate the Navy understands the importance of keeping the Sub Base in Groton. A number of base improvements have been approved, including new pier projects, new housing that will improve the quality of life for Navy personnel and a new weapons storage facility. The Navy has guaranteed that the first Virginia Class submarine, which was christened last year, will be stationed at Groton.

We have a dedicated team in place that is committed to ensuring the Naval Submarine Base New London remains open and vibrant. Groton is the submarine capitol of the world. Let's keep it that way. Let's save the base!